



Saskatchewan  
Agriculture  
and Food

# Farm & Food Report

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Saskatchewan





Log Number: 07-40-189  
Week of October 1, 2007

## ENROLMENT ON THE RISE FOR U OF S AG. COLLEGE

The College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan is reporting higher first-year enrolment heading into the new school year.

The college has enrolled 134 first-year students, who have already begun attending classes this semester, compared to the 105 first-year students enrolled last year.

This semester marks the first full year for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, formerly known as the College of Agriculture.

Graham Scoles, interim dean of the department, believes that several factors have contributed to the rise.

"I would like to think the higher first-year enrolment is due in part to the college's new name," he stated. "However, the greater explanation may be that the college has also been participating in active recruitment initiatives in recent years."

Scoles says the college decided to change its name to reflect how it has evolved and expanded over the course of time. "To many people, the word 'agriculture' denotes only the production side of the equation. Over its many years, this college has diversified to include new levels of expertise and new faculty members," he noted.

"So we had considerable discussions in terms of what name might better represent what we are and what we expect to become. 'Agriculture and Bioresources' was the one that struck us."

Up to this point, the school has been a single-degree college, offering only a bachelor's degree in science and agriculture. However, with its new name comes a new degree program that is already underway this semester – the Bachelor of Agribusiness.

Scoles says that several other new programs are also in the works. The college intends to introduce a bachelor's degree in renewable resource management next year, and the plans don't end there.

"We are trying to diversify our offerings, and we expect that, by adding new programs, we will attract students to the college who would have otherwise not been attracted before," Scoles stated. "So we're working on others, but are interested in seeing the impact of these new programs first. We don't want to over-extend ourselves."

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The college's ambitious recruitment is also believed to have had a positive impact on the increasing student numbers.

"Active recruitment activities are something the college had never tried before. They simply relied on students to come to the college on their own," Scoles said.

"Now, the college has a community liaison officer who is responsible for visiting various high schools and tradeshow to talk about the new vision for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. We believe these activities have made the positive impact on our first-year enrolment numbers."

The new vision Scoles refers to includes a modern emphasis on the bioresource value chain.

"The bioresource value chain begins with the environment in which we produce the plants and animals that we use in agriculture systems," he explained. "The other end of the chain, in terms of adding value to those products, is to drive economic activity and to essentially bring wealth to the province, its producers and its entrepreneurs."

Potential students can find out more about the college and its registration requirements at [www.ag.usask.ca](http://www.ag.usask.ca), and by watching for the college's presence at various tradeshow around the province.

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## A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO DISPOSE OF OLD PESTICIDES

The chance has come again for agricultural producers to properly dispose of their obsolete pesticides free of charge through the Saskatchewan Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign, which will be underway across the province from October 23 to 25.

"The Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign gives farmers the opportunity to safely dispose of de-registered, outdated, unwanted or otherwise obsolete agricultural pesticides during a three-day province-wide blitz," said Wayne Gosselin, an Environmental Policy Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF).

Pesticide products that will be accepted under the campaign include agricultural herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides.

It is also important to note the products that will not be accepted through the initiative: empty pesticide containers, spray tank rinsate, adjuvants, treated seed, home/garden pesticides, paints, thinners, waste oils or any other household hazardous waste.

Products destined for disposal will be accepted at designated ag-retail collection locations throughout Saskatchewan. "There will be 46 collection sites set up around the province, with the idea being that most agricultural areas of the province will be within 50 kilometres or so of a drop-off site," Gosselin said.

Producers can find the nearest collection depot by phoning their agricultural retailer or the SAF Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377, or by visiting the campaign website at [www.agr.gov.sk.ca/pesticidecollection](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/pesticidecollection) and checking out the associated map.

The collected pesticides will be safely packaged before being transported to a special waste treatment facility approved by Saskatchewan Environment for disposal in an environmentally responsible manner.

Disposal is free for agricultural and commercial-based operations. This includes farmers from all sectors of the industry. It also includes landscape companies, private forestry nurseries, golf courses, turf operations and commercial exterminators.

CropLife Canada is the industry umbrella group that represents the manufacturers and distributors of

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crop protection products. Under its mandate of "working responsibly to protect people and the environment," the organization is cost-sharing the initiative with the Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan (formerly the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development Inc.), which is contributing through the federal Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Saskatchewan (ACAAFS) program.

"We are pleased to be part of a program that provides farmers with a safe, effective and cost-free way to properly dispose of unwanted products," CropLife Canada Manager of Stewardship Development Russel Hurst said.

"This program is a great example of how government, grower organizations and industry can work co-operatively towards a better environment."

The campaign is a one-time opportunity with no legal implications or cost to producers. Those dropping off products are not required to identify themselves. All pesticides will be accepted, including those without valid *Canadian Pest Control Act* numbers. For safety reasons, however, all containers must be labelled.

"Please make sure containers are leak-free and a pesticide name is written on every container," Hurst said. "If you no longer know what the pesticide is, label the container 'pesticide unknown.'"

More information on the Saskatchewan Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign, including a list of collection locations and details on how to safely transport your pesticides, can be obtained from your farm supply dealer, by calling 1-416-622-9771, or by visiting [www.agr.gov.sk.ca/pesticidecollection](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/pesticidecollection).

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## DEAL WITH WEEDS IN THE FALL FOR A FRESHER SPRING

If Mother Nature has been good to you and your crops are largely in the bin, October is a good month to think about fall weed control.

Clark Brenzil, provincial specialist in weed control with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF), says there should still be some time for control measures before the snow flies.

"The challenge that arises with producers harvesting larger acreages in fall is that, unless the weather co-operates, they may not get done until very close to freeze-up," he stated. "At that point, it may be too late for some perennial weeds. But this year we saw many crops come off in mid-summer, which may present some opportunities for fall weed control."

Brenzil says that, for some weeds like Canada thistle, which are fairly hearty in the face of cold weather, there may still be good opportunities if the plants are in good condition and there haven't been many hard frosts yet. "We should still have some reasonably warm temperatures, and there's still a chance for herbicide to be absorbed by the plant and moved to the roots and developing buds underground. But for other perennial weeds, like dandelion, herbicide applications generally need to occur before October to be successful."

According to Brenzil, much of a producer's approach to fall weed control depends on the types of weeds being targeted. "If you're looking at a perennial that is more sensitive to frost, control needs to take place earlier in the fall, either with a pre-harvest herbicide application, or after harvest before there has been too much frost damage," he said.

"For winter annual weeds, later is better since they only begin to germinate in mid-September, and control needs to take place as late in the fall as possible to control them effectively."

The advantages of fall weed control are obvious when spring comes and your fields are already well prepared for the season. "Research is showing that the earlier perennial and winter annual weeds are controlled, the greater the yield benefit to the following crop," Brenzil said.

"If the weeds are left there until just before seeding, they use moisture and nutrient resources that could otherwise be used by the crop in that critical early development stage. If you can't get it done this fall, plan to control winter annuals and dandelion as soon as possible next spring."

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Brenzil says that post-harvest perennial weed control may be an option for many producers this year on fields where harvest took place earlier in the summer. "Perennial weeds that were cut off during harvest will have had the four to six weeks they need for adequate top re-growth in order to provide a good target for the herbicide spray."

According to Brenzil, a common mistake producers should avoid is trying to use the same herbicide rate they would with a pre-harvest treatment.

"Because the mature standing weeds were cut off with the crop, the leaf surface area of the weed that is able to intercept herbicide droplets has been reduced significantly," Brenzil stated. "Since there are a lower number of droplets for each plant, the concentration of herbicide in the spray solution must be increased by increasing the application rate in order to get the same amount of active ingredient into each plant. The rate needs to be right the first time because the first effect of glyphosate is to stop nutrient (and herbicide) movement in the plant, making additional herbicide applications ineffective."

Brenzil estimates there are at least 12 glyphosate formulations available now from six different manufacturers, plus glyphosate mixes with other herbicides. No matter which brand you choose, though, there are important things to remember when spraying the chemical.

"Glyphosate-based herbicides can be negatively affected by cold conditions. The ideal time to spray is when several days are expected to be bright and sunny, with temperatures in the 15 to 20 degree (Celsius) range and overnight lows no less than five degrees (Celsius). If glyphosate is sprayed under cool, cloudy conditions, there is a high risk of it getting trapped in the leaves and being unable to translocate to the roots," he noted.

"Die-back of perennial plants treated with glyphosate in the fall is not necessarily a good predictor of control come next spring. If glyphosate is sprayed on a day when sugars are being rapidly moved to the roots, the plant may not show signs of death this fall, but will not emerge next spring either, and that is the goal of the exercise."

Because of the cooler temperatures in mid- to late October, glyphosate may not be the most appropriate herbicide for winter annual control in late fall, and should be saved for next spring. Winter annual weeds such as stinkweed, flixweed, whitlow-grass, pygmyweed and shepherd's purse can be effectively controlled just before freeze-up using a light rate of 2,4-D (0.2 to 0.28 millilitres per acre of 600 grams-per-litre formulation).

Other problem winter annual weeds, like narrow-leaved hawk's-beard, should be left alone until being treated with glyphosate early in the spring. Not only is 2,4-D ineffective on hawk's-beard, but it injures the plant enough that it makes the glyphosate applied the next spring ineffective, as well.

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More information and advice on fall weed control can be found on the SAF website at [www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca), or by calling the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

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## FALL PLANNING FOR SPRING FORAGE SEEDING

Producers know that farming is a matter of not only focusing on what needs to be done today, but also of planning ahead for the future.

In light of this, Todd Jorgenson with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) says there are a number of factors producers looking at seeding perennial forage stands next spring can consider this fall, prior to purchasing seed or making final decisions.

"They should identify what forage species are best adapted to their soil type, moisture conditions and overall climate. They should factor in how the forage stand will be utilized, be it for grazing or hay, and the type of animals that will feed on it. And they need to consider how the stand will fit into their overall range or forage management plan," Jorgenson said.

Different forage species are adapted to different growing conditions. Jorgenson says these adaptations are well documented, and should be reviewed prior to purchasing seed.

"Some species, such as timothy, are poorly adapted to dry conditions and prefer poorly drained, highly fertile soils," he noted. "Others, such as crested wheatgrass, are poorly adapted to flooding and will do well under lower fertility. Meadow brome grass, on the other hand, is a species more broadly adapted to moderate flooding and drought, and with a moderate to high fertility requirement."

It is not uncommon for forage seed mixtures to contain all three of the species (timothy, crested wheatgrass and meadow brome grass) or more, as well as one or more legumes. However, if these forage mixtures are for grazing, livestock given the opportunity will select their preferred species and under-graze the others.

"If your field is variable, containing larger areas of different soil types, it is better to divide up these areas and seed to a best adapted single- or two-species mix," Jorgenson said. "Fields that are highly variable with many small acreages of different soils may not be practical to divide, and seeding a diverse forage mix would be a good choice in these conditions."

According to Jorgenson, care should still be taken in selecting a mix that will be adapted to a producer's local conditions. "Planning done over the fall and winter months, prior to seeding, can prevent purchasing poorly adapted forage species or mixtures, and result in a more productive, long-lived stand," he stated.

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This includes having a clear idea of how the producer intends to graze the new forage stand. Complex pasture mixtures may not only contain poorly adapted, short-lived species, but they are also difficult to manage.

Different species have different growth patterns and rates of regrowth. Jorgenson says the best way to manage for these growth and regrowth characteristics is to seed them alone or with an adapted legume. "This will eliminate livestock selective grazing, and also enable producers to monitor grass growth in paddocks much more easily to take advantage of the growth cycle of the forage," he stated.

"Planning now for spring seeding is time well spent."

More information and advice on planning for spring forage seeding can be found on the SAF website at [www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca), or by calling the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377. SAF forage development specialists are also available through the SAF regional offices to help develop or review seed mixtures and grazing management plans, as well as to help with Environmental Farm Planning (EFP).

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